

# ST PAUL LUTHERAN NEWSLETTER

July/August 2023

Volume 77 No.7

## *Being Christian in America*

*Pastor Christopher P. Vossler*

*“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!” (Psalm 33:12)*

*“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.” (Romans 13:1)*

*“We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29)*

When I was in high school, I had a t-shirt I loved to wear that said “My Faith and My Freedom Are One,” with Psalm 33:12a on the back. That was back during the years after September 11, when America was swept by national pride, and I wasn’t immune to it. But as I look back on those days, as I reevaluate that slogan, I find myself wondering: is that really the case? *Should* that really be the case? Is it healthy for us as American Christians to conflate those two identities together? Are “my faith and my freedom” one and the same?

Before going any further, it is important to remember that God is the ruler of *all* the nations of the world. God’s Law – written on human hearts – forms the basis for every human law. Those who are placed in positions of authority in earthly government are given that authority by God Himself, regardless of the mechanism by which they come into power. Jesus in

Matthew 28 said that, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” He rules the heavens and the earth, so all authority ultimately derives from Him. And that means that all governing authorities will be held accountable by God for the way in which they exercise that authority. This holds true in America, in Russia, in every nation of the world.

But does that mean that our American identity and our Christian identity are the same?

I think this comes down to a question of identity. I am an American citizen. I am a Christian. Both of these statements are true, yet one is more important than the other. But which one? Yes, I am an American citizen by birth, but first and foremost I am a Christian through my rebirth in Baptism. In Philippians 3:20, Paul tells his readers – and us as well – that “our citizenship is in heaven.” Our earthly citizenship is a good thing, and God does command us to be obedient citizens. But the more important citizenship – the one with eternal implications – is that in heaven.

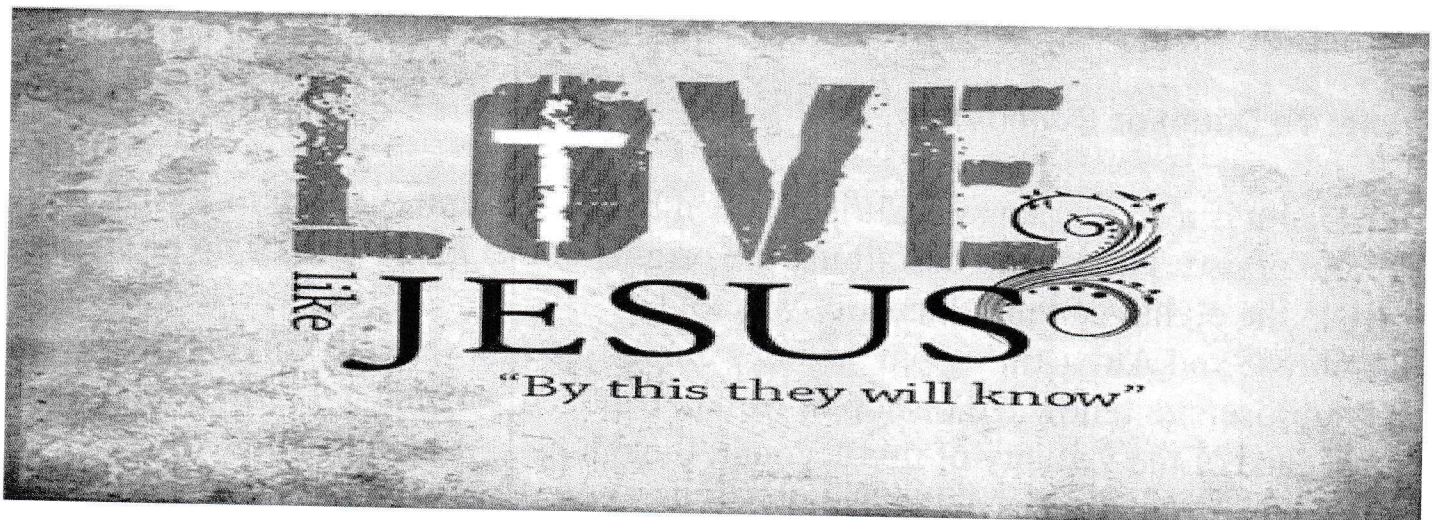
## *St. Paul Stephen Ministry Corner*

*“Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ”*  
(Galatians 6:2, NRSV)

***Stephen Ministries is beginning classes in July. Please check with Michelle for information.*** Michelle DeCoe has completed the training for the leadership role for Stephen Ministry. There needs to be at least two people in the leadership role. Marilyn Bowen has graciously accepted the position for the second leader. She will begin training for position in July. After completion of the leadership program, Michelle and Marilyn will be offering classes for other members of the congregation to become knowledgeable and supported components of the team. The classes will be teaching members how to support others through



difficult times. This includes everything from death, divorce, medical crisis, moving, life changes and so much more. The struggles of life are ever changing as we evolve through life. We in Stephen Ministry would like to promote a supportive church environment that nurtures our members in need. You are the CHURCH; and we would appreciate support and involvement by the congregation. We never know what is in store for us as we navigate through this world. We are hoping to develop preparedness in our church for the call. Will you love your neighbors as yourself? Will you be the Good Samaritan that stopped to help another in time of need? This ministry is centered around God being the main healer. The caregiver is a vessel for healing to begin. We are not looking for people to fix others. We are looking for people to be open to hearing each other in a supportive way. There are skills that need to be learned so you are prepared and not overwhelmed. Once you have completed the courses, you may be paired with someone in the congregation that needs emotional support, while going through a rough time. This would take approximately one hour a week, until they are feeling more secure regarding their matter in question. Confidentiality is one of the main foundations of this work and is stressed throughout Stephen Ministry. If you are interested in becoming a part of this ministry, please contact Michelle DeCoe 989-513-1736. I am taking down names of interested parties. I would like to know what would work for class times in the future; evening, day, weekend or retreat style....also, be sure to visit [stephenministries.org](http://stephenministries.org) to learn more.



“We may think our prayers are small in relation to the magnitude of the problem of abortion. Not so! ... Educate yourself, your children, and the people you know ... Support leaders who embrace these words, ‘All men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness’ ... We have the most hopeful message the world has ever heard. You know it. God does big things with small stuff. How can we be so sure? Shiphrah and Puah, Jochebed, Miriam, and Moses ... and especially Jesus. Amen.” *Rev. Dr. Reed Lessing, Concordia University, St. Paul, Minnesota – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org Hurting from abortion? Word of Hope can help. Word-of-hope.org; 888-217-8679*

## **An Overview of the Office of Matins**

The Daily Office has given voice to the daily prayer of the faithful in “many and various ways” over the centuries (*LSB*, p. 238; Hebrews 1:1). The name “daily” ties these services to the Christian’s temporal existence, defined as it is by our daily rising with the new sun—a reminder of the Lord’s resurrection—and daily return to bed in the confidence that Christ, the Light of the world, would bring safety and repose during the night hours. Over the next few months we will be going through the elements to Office of Matins. We will be using this worship service with some frequency.

### **Canticle: Te Deum or Benedictus**

The Te Deum is a trinitarian and Christological hymn that unites proclamation with prayer and praise. The legend describing the origins of the Te Deum is a favorite. Already in the eighth century, the story was told of how Ambrose and Augustine spontaneously composed this venerable hymn of praise when Ambrose, the renowned bishop of Milan, baptized Augustine in 387. Luther was not convinced of the veracity of this account, though he saw no harm in believing it. More recent scholarship has debunked the myth, and scholars are only able to say with certainty that the canticle was written in Latin some time in the early fifth century, perhaps having been compiled by Bishop Nicetas.

The use of Zechariah's song of thanksgiving following the circumcision and naming of his son, John, (Luke 1:68–79) is of long-standing usage in the Daily Office. The allusion to light (“when the day shall dawn upon us”) may be one of the reasons for its use as a morning canticle.

In addition to the much-loved setting of the Te Deum in Matins, *LSB* provides three alternate settings that can be substituted on occasion: *LSB* 939, “You Are God; We Praise You”; *LSB* 940, “Holy God, We Praise Thy Name”; and *LSB* 941, “We Praise You and Acknowledge You, O God.” For the Benedictus, in addition to the setting in Matins, there is one hymn paraphrase at *LSB* 936, “Sing Praise to the God of Israel.”

## Prayer

Given that the various services of the Daily Office are prayer offices, this final section on prayer brings each to a fitting conclusion. In the early cathedral office, the people found the prayers to be one of the few places where they could actively participate as they cried out their “Kyrie eleison” to a series of prayer bids. . . . One option in the Daily Office is that of replacing the entire Prayer section with the Litany (*LSB*, pp. 288–89), Responsive Prayer (*LSB*, pp. 282–87), or the Bidding Prayer (*LSB Altar Book*, pp. 406–409). . . . For example, during Lent, the Litany would make a fitting substitution.

## Gathered for Prayer

The services in *LSB* provide great flexibility to serve in our own day in a multitude of settings. Wherever Christians gather daily for prayer, these services can be used as presented in the book, making slight adaptations, such as how many psalms, readings, and hymns to include, according to the time and musical forces that are available. If a congregation prays Matins . . . on a Sunday morning when the Sacrament is not celebrated, [this] service will normally be used in all [its] fullness, including multiple psalms, several readings, hymns, and a fuller selection of prayers. On the other end of the spectrum, individuals and families can find great benefit in praying the offices, simplifying the rites as needed to fit the abilities and needs of those using the rites.

Blog post excerpted from *Lutheran Service Book: Companion to the Services*, pages xxxv, xlii, 663, 666–67, 690–91, 697, 699, 701, 703, 708, 712, 716, © 2022 Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved.

Next month: A description of the *History of Hymns in the LSB*

**Important Dates for upcoming Ladies Aid activities.** We will request volunteers and provide details closer to the dates.

<b>Aug 24 &amp; 25</b>	Ladies Aid Rummage Sale
<b>Oct 6, 2023</b>	Harvest Dinner
<b>Oct 10, 2023</b>	First Day of the Peanut Brittle Season
<b>Nov 4, 2023</b>	Craft Show
<b>Dec 16, 2023</b>	Holiday Cookie & Gingerbread Decorating



**August 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>**

**Ladies Aid Annual Rummage Sale**

August 24th 9am-5pm (Thursday) & 25<sup>th</sup> 9am-2pm (Friday). Please start saving your donations now

*thank you!*

*Thank you Janet Laplow for the bell tower Geraniums ☺*

*Thank you to Randy Engblade, Mike Schweigert, Bob Burnison for all the lawn mowing being done.*

*Thank you to the DeCoes' for the work done in the parsonage garden. ☺*

*Thank you Julie VanKuiken for her work in the hosta garden*

*Thank you Wade O'Dell for the work on the flag light.*

*Thank you to all of the Vacation Bible School leaders and helpers!*

## SOCIAL MEDIA

**Social Media and Website-**In a continuing effort to keep our church website current and interesting, we are going to begin posting pictures of our members engaged in the various activities held at the Church and elsewhere on google and Facebook. Children will require special permission. If you would prefer not to have any pictures of you posted, please let Linda Mitchell know.

**MIDLAND COUNTY NEWSLETTER ONLINE – Subscribe here (very informative):**

<https://www.co.midland.mi.us> and search Midland County Newsletter.

**MICHIGAN MINUTE: Weekly E-news & Events of the Michigan District, LCMS**

<http://www.michigandistrict.org/connect/publications/michiganminute>

**SMART PHONE USERS:** There are two free apps available for your devices that pertain to your Lutheran Beliefs? LCMS app is free and provides great information including a Daily Devotion. The other is Luther's Small Catechism app which is also free. If you have questions or would like to check it out and need assistance please contact the church office.

**The Lutheran Witness** is now a free digital app. Once subscribers download the free *Lutheran Witness* magazine app, each new issue automatically will be sent to their newsstands for convenient viewing. Note: While the app itself is free, you will need a paid subscription to the magazine in order to receive it via the app. If you have any questions or would like to see whether the magazine is available for your device, visit [www.cph.org/witness](http://www.cph.org/witness) to learn more or to download the app. You may also call Concordia Publishing House at 800-325-3040.

**Lutheran Service Book** - EBook Edition at [enews@cph.org](mailto:enews@cph.org) **OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA:**

[www.facebook.com/thelcms](http://www.facebook.com/thelcms)

[www.twitter.com/thelcms](http://www.twitter.com/thelcms)

[www.youtube.com/thelcms](http://www.youtube.com/thelcms)

[www.lcms.org/socialmedia](http://www.lcms.org/socialmedia)

**KITCHEN GARBAGE Bags:** **ALL** garbage bags removed from the Kitchen **MUST** be placed in dumpster and **NOT** left outside the back kitchen door.  
**RECYCLING:** A large bin for recycling only has been placed outside the back kitchen door ... **THIS IS FOR RECYCLING ONLY!** We also have smaller recycling receptacles around the church which are marked with a recycling symbol.



## LADIES AID

The third Wednesday of every month is set aside for our monthly meetings at 9:00am

### Ladies Aid Board

Christy Martin-President / Carolyn Sutton-Vice President  
Pam Kastl-Secretary / Vicki Barnard-Treasurer

Questions may be directed to: Christy Martin  
817.757.9577 email CKM57@me.com or  
Carolyn Sutton 989.631-3953.

## BULLETIN / NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

If you have information you would like placed into any upcoming bulletins or newsletters, please submit to the church office via email at [stpaul Lutheran@tds.net](mailto:stpaul Lutheran@tds.net), calling 687-2824 or by placing it in the church office mailbox located between the restrooms downstairs. Don't forget to state the date(s) you'd like your information to run.

### DEADLINES

Newsletters                      20<sup>th</sup> (monthly)  
Bulletins                      Wednesday's by  
Noon

**Outdoor Services – July 23<sup>rd</sup> and August 27<sup>th</sup>**

**Potluck Lunch** will follow the Outdoor Services :)

**Council Meetings will be on 7/16 and 8/13 @ 11am.**

**Men's Breakfast:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month

**Ladies' Bible Study:** 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the Month

**Euchre Night:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of Month 7pm

**LifeLight Bible Study/Confirmation Class:** on vacation

*Ann and Samuel Reith will be celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on Sunday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> 4-6pm, in the fellowship hall. Please see their announcement on the bulletin board. If you would like to attend, please sign up. ☺*



**Tuesday, July 11<sup>th</sup> - 6pm - All youth** are invited to the

Hollywood Blockbuster "Spiderman-into the spider-verse" Movie Night/Bible Study. Pizza/Popcorn/Beverages > Plans to campfire smores during conversation on the movie. Participants will help to pick the next movie! ☺

We are looking to form a **Youth Ministry Board** that will focus on the planning of education/activities designed for our congregation's youth. **Next meetings are July 27<sup>th</sup> and August 24<sup>th</sup> @ 6pm.** Please let Gerianne or Pastor know if you can help.

**Sunday School Parents Meeting**  
August 27<sup>th</sup> after Potluck lunch.





**August 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>**

**Ladies Aid Annual Rummage Sale**

August 24<sup>th</sup> 9am-5pm (Thursday) & 25<sup>th</sup> 9am-2pm (Friday). Please start saving your donations now

**September 10<sup>th</sup> - Rally Day kicking off Sunday School, LifeLight, and Confirmation classes.**

**“BECAUSE WE CARE”**

**Prayer Request:** If you or someone you know are in need of prayers please call Edna Rottiers at 989-687-9687. **Those** with additional prayer request please complete a prayer slip and give to one of our Elders before the service or to one of the Ushers during the offering. Your prayers are important and our Lord does promise to answer.

**Pastoral Care:** Please contact the Pastor @ cell 973-303-8252, office 989-687-2209, or email [stpaulrev@tds.net](mailto:stpaulrev@tds.net). The Church Office (989-687-2824) / cell (989 859-9300) email [stpaulutheran@tds.net](mailto:stpaulutheran@tds.net), or Deacon Don Barnard (989-751-7726) email: [esocidnator01@gmail.com](mailto:esocidnator01@gmail.com). Or [stpauldeacon@tds.net](mailto:stpauldeacon@tds.net) if you or anyone you know are in need of a visit from the Pastor or Deacon whether it's an illness, hospitalization, nursing home or shut-in. It is important to us that we receive these communications to plan a call or visitation. May God's blessings be upon you today and every day!

Our florist is, **HANNAH'S FLOWERS**, in Midland. She will be making us a \$25 arrangement. Please continue to return the vases back to the church to help keep the price lower. All other florist prices were higher. You will continue to make your flower payment to the church. Any questions, please talk with Carolyn.

Thank you,

*Carolyn* 631-3953

June Altar Guild representative is Shirley Rinas 989.687.2268

**To our families with small children: Relax!** You and your children are welcome to our worship service! Being in worship with you to observe and participate in the service will help them to learn how to behave in church – and they will learn that best by watching you worship on a regular basis! Sit anywhere in the sanctuary that you wish. The last two rows of pews are set aside



for families with small children, but you don't *have* to sit there. In fact, sitting close to the front so your children can see what's happening may help them to feel more involved in the service. If they need something to keep their hands occupied, please ask one of the ushers for a copy of the children's bulletins for them to color. If for any reason you need to take your children out of the sanctuary so they can calm down, feel free to bring them into the bathroom at the back of the church. In addition, at the bottom of the stairs we have a cry room to the right, as well as the fellowship hall to the left. With the speakers in the basement, you will be able to hear the service while your child calms down. If your children don't want to sit still or be quiet through the whole service, there is absolutely

nothing wrong with them: they are young and learning. The sound of children in worship is the sound of the Church's future.

**Please be on the lookout for “phishing” emails and Texts that look like they were sent from Pastor.** If you get an email or text asking for something from Pastor, read the from line at the top to see that it was sent from “stpaulrev”, or the Pastor's phone #, or ask Pastor. The bad guys are searching trying to scam people.

**If you are interested in private Communion** ...for whatever the reason. Pastor Vossler and Deacon Barnard are willing to share the Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior in a private setting. Please contact at their listing for Pastoral care.

## **THRIVENT**

**Thrivent Action Team Dollars:** St. Paul Members who belong to Thrivent Financial have a unique opportunity to provide financial help for a project here at St. Paul. Each Thrivent member is eligible to receive \$250 twice per year from Thrivent to contribute to a St. Paul project. Examples of projects include: parades, Wild Game Dinner, Easter Breakfast, Harvest Dinner and many others. If you are a Thrivent Member that would like to help us with Thrivent Action Team Dollars on future projects please contact the church office to be placed on a list. Your help is greatly appreciated!

## **CHOICE DOLLARS**

**I WOULD LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE WHO TOOK THE TIME AND MADE A PHONE CALL TO THRIVENT FOR THE CHOICE DOLLARS. I'M ASKING EVERYONE WHO HAS A THRIVENT POLICY TO CALL, EVEN IF IN DOUBT REGARDING YOUR POLICY ELIGIBILITY.**

**CALL 1-800-847-4836 THEN PUSH 1. THIS IS A PHONE CALL, NOT A COMPUTER GENERATED VOICE. THEY EVEN SPEAK ENGLISH AS THEY ARE BASED IN APPLETON, WISC. CALL IN APRIL 2023, JULY, OCTOBER, AND THEN AGAIN IN JANUARY 2024. THESE FUNDS ARE DIRECT DEPOSITED INTO THE CHURCH'S BANK ACCOUNT, SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO HANDLE THEM. THESE ARE 2022 EARNED DOLLARS BEING GIVEN IN 2023. NEXT YEAR MAY BE MORE OR LESS DEPENDING ON THE ECONOMY.**

**-WILLIAM P. MITCHELL**



**St. Paul Coffee Mugs** are available for \$5.00. If interested, please see Linda Mitchell or Margie Dittmer

**Mission of the Month:** *In July*, we are receiving offerings to help support the **Lutheran Braille Workers project at Grace Lutheran Church in Auburn.** By providing Braille, Large Print and Audio Bibles, LBW provides the Word of God to Blind or Visually Impaired individuals at no cost to them. (Additional information is on display in the Fellowship Hall.)

**Mission of the Month:** *In August*, we are receiving offerings to help support **Joshua's House**, where women receive guidance and opportunities that assist in caring for themselves and their newborn infant.

**Sanford Food Pantry – Please continue your support of this very worthwhile local ministry.** There are refillable canvas bags from the Midland County Emergency Food Pantry available on the food pantry table in the fellowship hall. The bags have a suggested list of items and instructions. You may take these bags home and place the purchased items in the bag and return it to the church. The bags will be delivered to the Sanford Food Pantry the last

week of the month. The empty bags will be returned to the church to be used again. Thank you for all of the items and monetary donations. *Your donations are appreciated, but please note that the Food Pantry does not accept: 1) weight-loss products; nor 2) food items with an expired date. If you prefer to make a monetary donation, please put in the Public Relations Mailbox. Thank you for your consideration in helping those less fortunate. Please make the check payable to Sanford Food Pantry*

**Current needs are: Hamburger, Chicken, or Tuna Helper, Kid Snacks: Jello/Pudding/Fruit Cups; Granola/Fruit Bars; Snack-Size chips, pretzels, Doritos, etc**

**Pictorial directory-** Please check with Linda, Margie, Ruth or Kathy to help retrieve yours from the office. 😊

**Has your contact info changed?** If so, please contact the church office (687-2824) or [stpaul Lutheran@tds.net](mailto:stpaul Lutheran@tds.net) and provide us with the changed information (address, phone, email or any other information).

**Hear Pastor's Sermon message** from last week online

@Stpaul Lutheran Sanford.net just click on the microphone on the home page and refresh your thoughts (and refresh the page) on the sermon message from the previous week.



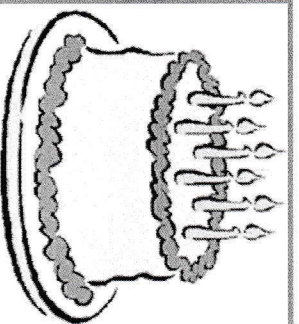
**Nativity Project-** We are accepting donations to the Nativity as we work toward the purchase of a set. Please make your donation out to the church and note that the amount should be directed to the Nativity. Any ?'s please check with Gerianne.

**Social Media and Website-** In a continuing effort to keep our church website current and interesting, we are going to begin posting pictures of our members engaged in the various activities held at the Church and elsewhere on google and Facebook. Children will require special permission. If you would prefer not to have any pictures of you posted, please let Linda Mitchell know.

***Prayer Request:*** *If you or someone you know are in need of prayers please call or email Edna Rottiers at 989-687-9687 / [hughrottiers@gmail.com](mailto:hughrottiers@gmail.com) . Those with additional prayer request please complete a prayer slip and give to one of our Elders before the service or to one of the Ushers during the offering. Your prayers are important and our Lord does promise to answer*

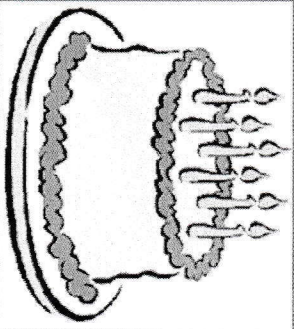
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# July Birthdays and Anniversaries



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
Worship Service with Communion 9:30am McKenna Burns	John Eshleman Pam & Gordon Melchi-Annv	Brandon Gowing	Herb Emmel Diana Kausch	Carol & Roger Salisbury-Annv Lynn & Mark Burns-Annv	Erin Teachworth	Men's Breakfast 8am Lutheranism 10:1-10am
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Worship Service 9:30am	Dave Chubb	Youth Movie Night 6pm	Ashley Ferguson Gary Smith Jackson Teachworth	Christy Martin Sandy & Jerry Zilincik-Annv	Euchre Night 7pm	15
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Worship Service with Communion 9:30am Council Meeting 11am	Pat Jewett Sydney Laplow Benjamin Reith	Megan & Daniel Giddings-Annv Daniel Giddings Bobby Hill III	Grace & Ronald Cumming-Annv Shari Draves	Madison Giddings Brian Laplow	Ladies Bible Study 9am Lutheranism 10:1-10am	22
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Outdoor Worship Service 9:30am Reith Anniversary Celebration 4-6pm	Margie & James Dittmer-Annv Mary Laplow Duane Novak	Hope Bishop Tristan Martin	Lisa & Ken Sanderson Jr-Annv Scott Tigner Youth Group Meeting 6pm		Rebecca & Carl Cogging-Annv Margie Dittmer	29
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Ann & Samuel Reith Annv	Lynette Laplow					
30	31					

# August Birthdays and Anniversaries



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		Jonathan & Hailee Laplow - Annv		Blake Weakman		Mae & Pete Laplow- Annv Shirley Rinas Lutheranism 101 10am
Worship Service with Communion 9:30am		Youth Movie Night 6pm	Aaron Holsinger		Myrna Langston Megan Truddell	Brendan Novak Men's Breakfast 8am
Worship Service 9:30am		Dean & Mary Brewster- Annv	Laura Sprenger		Zac Brawt Stacy Smith	Lutheranism 101 10am
Council Meeting 11am						Euahre Night 7pm
Worship Service with Communion 9:30am	Jacquelyn Chubb Nancy Retzlloff	Brenda Finney Jared Reger		Ladies Aid Rummage Sale 9-5pm	Ladies Aid Rummage Sale 9-2pm	Ladies Bible Study gam
				Youth Group Meeting 6pm		
Outdoor Service 9:30am Potluck lunch following: Sunday School Parent Meeting after Potluck				Kenneth Sanderson Jr.		

July Volunteer Schedule					
	2-Jul	9-Jul	16-Jul	23-Jul	30-Jul
ACOLYTES	Deklan & Sam	Jace & Garrett	Madison & Bradyn	Lucas & Jeffrey	Deklan & Bradyn
ALTAR FLOWERS	Lynn & Mark Burns	Diana Kausch	Donna Piper	Ann & Sam Reith	Open
ALTAR GUILD	Carolyn Sutton 989.631.3953				
GREETERS	Marilyn Bowen	Edna Rottiers	Charlene & Bob Burnison	Outdoor Service	Ann Reith
FELLOWSHIP	Myrna, Patty, Christy	Open	Open	Outdoor Service	Open
ORGANIST	Heidi Stecker	Heidi Stecker	Sara Glynn-Dishaw	Sara Glynn-Dishaw	Sara Glynn-Dishaw
PROCLAIMER	Pastor Christopher Vossler	Pastor Christopher Vossler	Pastor Christopher Vossler	Pastor Christopher Vossler	Deacon Donald Barnard
SUNDAY SCHOOL STAFF	*	*	*	*	*
USHERS	Elders	Lynn & Jace Burns	Lynn & Jace Burns	Shirley Rinas & Jack Moellar	Shirley Rinas & Jack Moellar
ELDERS	Mark Sprenger, Bob Burnison, Deacon Donald Barnard, Deno O'Connor, Bill Mitchell, Larry Terbush & Mark Burns				

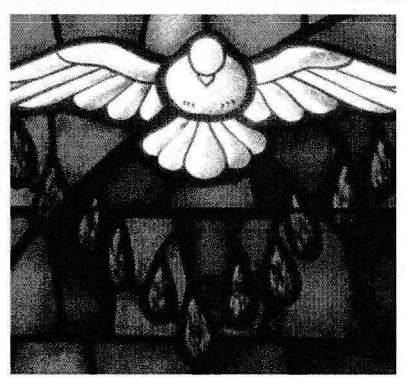
August Volunteer Schedule					
	6-Aug	13-Aug	20-Aug	27-Aug	3-Sep
ACOLYTES	Madison & Garrett	Jace & Lucas	Sam & Bradyn	Jeffrey & Madison	Garrett & Lucas
ALTAR FLOWERS	Shirley Rinas	Christy & Patty	Open	Open	Open
ALTAR GUILD	Carolyn Sutton 989.631.3953				
GREETERS	Diana Kausch	Bob & Charlene Burnison	Patty Billingsley	Diana Kausch	Open
FELLOWSHIP	Open	Patty & Christy	Open	Potluck	Open
ORGANIST	Heidi Stecker	Heidi Stecker	Sara Glynn-Dishaw	Sara Glynn-Dishaw	Heidi Stecker
PROCLAIMER	Pastor Christopher Vossler	Pastor Christopher Vossler	Pastor Christopher Vossler	Pastor Christopher Vossler	Pastor Christopher Vossler
SUNDAY SCHOOL STAFF	*	*	*	*	*
USHERS	Linda Mitchell & Marilyn Bowen	Linda Mitchell & Marilyn Bowen	Bob & Charlene Burnison	Bob & Charlene Burnison	Elders
ELDERS	Mark Sprenger, Bob Burnison, Deacon Donald Barnard, Deno O'Connor, Bill Mitchell, Larry Terbush & Mark Burns				

SERVING THE LORD IN  
**LATVIA**

NEWS FROM THE RAJEKS IN RĪGA



June-August 2023



## *Come, Holy Ghost, Creator Blest*

*Come, Holy Ghost, Creator  
blest, And make our hearts  
Your place of rest; Come with  
Your grace and heav'nly aid,  
And fill the hearts which You  
have made.*

*In You, with graces sevenfold,  
We God's almighty hand  
behold While you with tongues  
of fire proclaim To all the  
world His holy name.*

*Teach us to know the Father,  
Son, And You, from both, as  
Three in One. That we Your  
name may ever bless And in  
our lives the truth confess.*

LSB 499, v. 1, 3, 6



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## **A New Year brings A New Position**

by Cory J. Rajek



A photo taken on June 2023 in front of the altar at Svētā Jāņa Eвангēliski luteriskā baznīca (St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church) in Rīga, Latvia. Pictured are (L to R) Alexis, Emiley, Jenny and Cory.

After 8 years of faithful service as Regional Director for Eurasia, Rev. James Krikava stepped down from the position and was installed as the associate executive director for the Office of International Mission (OIM) of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). But before he left Eurasia, and with the approval of President Matthew Harrison, Rev. Krikava appointed me to be the next regional director. And, after much conversation and deliberation, I was led to accept the position which began on January 1, 2023. To be clear, the regional director's role is one of coordination and supervision for all the work that the LCMS is doing in every Eurasian country.

The regional director is the primary interface between workers on the ground in Eurasia and our leadership and support in the US and serves as the chief advocate for the workers with the staff and

leadership in St. Louis. This means that, in addition to serving the people in Latvia, my family and I will have the opportunity to continue our partnership and serve people throughout the Eurasia region, which includes Iceland to the farthest tip of Russia (although, due to the war, not much is going on there right now), from Scandinavia to the Middle East and to the southern tip of India. Geographically speaking, it is the largest region in OIM. As I adapt to my new responsibilities, I humbly ask for your prayers.

My family and I are going to remain living in Riga, as we have come to love this place and its people. Yet our partnership with you expands to encompass a vast array of people and cultures. From the Holy Land to the birthplace of Lutheranism to the heart of Islam and to the former atheistic Soviet Union, the Eurasia Region engages everyone with Word and Sacrament ministry.





**PLEASE PRAY:**

- For the upcoming Synod convention and those who will be traveling.
- For Luther Academy in Rīga that God would continue to bless our outreach efforts.
- For the Eurasia Region missionaries and their families that they find joy and satisfaction in their service.
- For the Ukrainians, especially the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ukraine as they suffer from the effects of the war.

**GIVE THANKS:**

- For the successful renewal of our visas so that we can continue to serve God in the Eurasia Region.
- For the many congregations and individuals who pray for us, encourage and support us in this important mission.

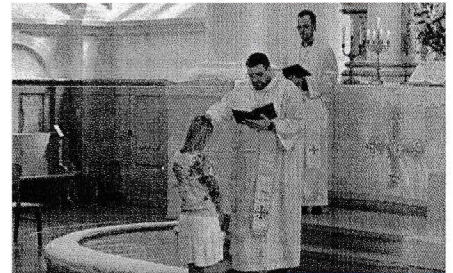
**PRAISE GOD:**

- For our faithful church partners throughout the world, especially those in the Eurasia Region who work side-by-side with us in this mission God gave.

**New Position...cont.**

This opportunity to reach others with the Gospel of Jesus Christ is both exciting and overwhelming. As I have done in the past, once again, I ask for your continued support of the work I am doing on behalf of Christ and His church. Only this time, this work includes not only pastoral formation through Luther Academy in Riga, but also the added responsibility of supporting the Church's missionaries throughout the Eurasia Region. The potential we have as partners in this

mission is immense. Thank you and the Lord be with you!



The first confirmation at the English service at St. John's in Riga since our Latvian partner, Rev. Gints, and I relaunched services in August 2022. LCMS missionary, Rev. Cundiff is presiding with Rev. Gints looking on.

**Rajek Family Update**

by Jenny Rajek

Greetings from Riga, Latvia. It was a very busy school year for Emiley and Lexi. Emiley started college in January of 2023 as a student at Concordia University Nebraska. She will continue this fall working on a degree in Art Therapy. Emiley has arrived in Riga for the summer to visit. It is wonderful to have her here. Emiley was very glad to see her dogs again after almost a year.

working on completing her 11<sup>th</sup> grade requirements in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program at the International School of Riga. IB is a rigorous college preparatory program. She will certainly earn her summer vacation once it arrives.

Lexi is currently in 11<sup>th</sup> grade and is still working hard in school at the time of this newsletter. She has been

I have recently taken over the responsibility for the upkeep of the Eurasia Facebook Page from Connie Cortright. Thank you to Connie for all her years filling this role for the region.

Visu Labu (All the Best)!

*I would like to sincerely thank you for your support of the Lord's mission in Eurasia. We could not be touching people's lives with the message of Jesus Christ without you. Please prayerfully consider sharing this mission with others. Tell them of the good that God is doing throughout this exciting mission.*

*Once again, from the bottom of my heart, thank you and the Lord be with you.*

~Cory J. Rajek



There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at [lcms.org/service](https://lcms.org/service). Click on "Service Opportunities."

Prayerfully consider partnering with the LCMS to support the work of Rev. Dr. Cory J. Rajek. Make checks payable to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
P.O. Box 66861  
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

OR

Mission Central  
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On the memo line include *Rajek-Latvia*

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